

THE

שקל

SHEKEL

Published by the
AMERICAN ISRAEL
NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC.



VOLUME XXXII

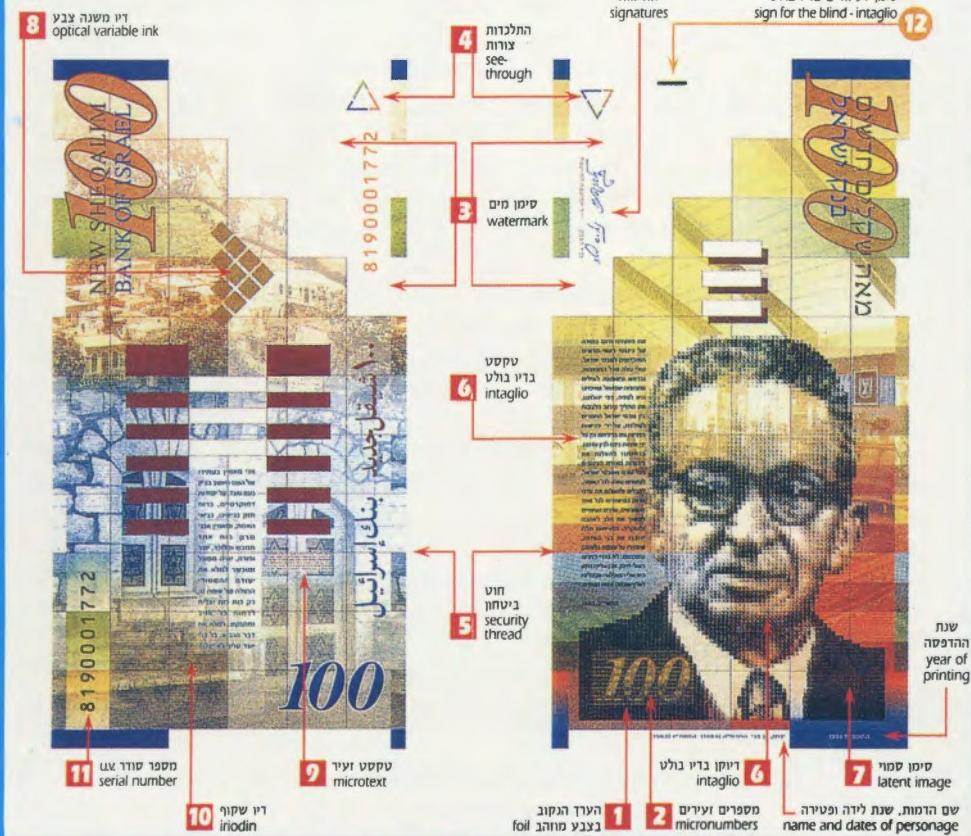
No. 2

MARCH-APRIL 1999

סימני ביטחון משותפים לכל השטרות security features common to all denominations علامات الامان المشتركة لجميع الأوراق النقدية

צד הגב back الجانب الآخر

צד הפנים front الجانب الداخلي



THE NEW ISRAELI BANKNOTES

OUR ORGANIZATION

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The American Israel Numismatic Association is a cultural and educational organization dedicated to the study and collection of Israel's coinage, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. It is a democratically organized, membership oriented group, chartered as a non-profit association under the laws of The State of New York. The primary purpose is the development of programs, publications, meetings and other activities which will bring news, history, social and related background to the study and collection of Judaic numismatics, and the advancement of the hobby.

The Association sponsors major cultural/social/numismatic events such as national and regional conventions, study tours to Israel, publication of books, and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. Local chapters exist in many areas. Write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership and neither solicits nor accepts advertising. All articles published are the views and opinions of the authors and may or may not reflect the views and opinions of A.I.N.A.

Membership fees: Annual \$15.-, Life \$200.-, Foreign \$22.-

Club membership \$15- Send all remittances, correspondence undelivered magazines, change of address and zip code with old address label to:

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ISSN 0087-3486

Printed by our friends at Little River Press in Miami.

The President's Message by Moe Weinschel

Dear members:



Normally, at this time there would be an air of excitement all around, with preparations for the "Annual AINA Study Tour". Regrettfully, we have had to cancel it for lack applicants. Also, illness among other reasons caused a number of applicants to request refunds. I am not alone in feeling letdown since we always had great experiences on all the previous tours. Hopefully, we will be able to have a tour in year 2000, which promises to be a special mark on the calendar. However, to have great trip we must plan far ahead. That is why we are asking all to reserve the middle two weeks in March of 2000. Extensive plans are being made to welcome an influx of Year 2K visitors. and we, as always will get RED CARPET treatment and be able to see and do things off the beaten paths. We will be happy to discuss these plans and add any special interest points. Again, we must PLAN AHEAD! So, watch for announcements.

Current changes in the Financial World make us reevaluate our financial status. Interest rates have dropped so low that AINA is earning less from investments made in earlier times. We should reexamine our membership and subscription fees, and make every effort to continue our high quality status. Your thoughts and reactions are welcome. Please call, write, send e-mail etc., so that we have a consensus for presentation to our next Board meeting. As always, new members are a priority. Please use the application on the back page of The Shekel. Make a friend and earn a numismatic gift..

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Moe".

We encourage visits to our Web Site: <http://amerisrael.com>
E-Mail ainany@aol.com

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Special note from Florence Schuman to our "snow bird" members. Please do not forget to update your address changes. Thank You.

The First Two Denominations in the new Israeli Banknote Series

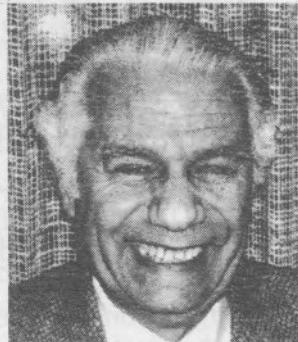
NIS 20.- and NIS 100.-

by Shmuel Aviezer

On the morning of January 3, 1999, the people of Israel took a comprehensive look at the two brand-new and crisp banknotes introduced by the Bank of Israel as the first of the new series to be issued during 1999. The two denominations, NIS 20.- and NIS 100.-, usher a totally unconventional conception of design and a multitude of security features unprecedented in the banknotes of Israel.

It is now conceived in the realm of banknote industry that it is more serious to tackle the ever-growing threat of forgeries that exploit advanced techniques of photography and color combinations than to follow the classical display of naturalistic features that in many cases proved to be more vulnerable to forfeiting. With the highly sophisticated development of computerized processes and the advancement of printing methods, it became only greatly-functional to utilize all these efficient utilities and produce a banknote immune to most of the counterfeiting attempts. In materializing these ends, less emphasis is put on designing an easy-to-look depiction of the hitherto usual features of a banknote (the portrait, the accompanying back-ground subjects etc.) and more brains are invested in adjoining inventive security elements in a harmonious and effective way. This concept has been brewing for a long time in the mind of banknote creators in the belief that the public in general, that daily user, is more concerned to have at hand a genuine non-forged banknote, its face value easily discernible and distinct enough in color that obliterate the confusion with other notes, than to be served with beautifully and classically designed banknotes (mostly even unaware of the personalities depicted on them) which tend to become a repetitious victim of counterfeiting.

The new Israeli banknotes demonstrate an articulate intertwining of the up-to-date security features that rank them in the distinguished gallery of the most-advanced banknotes in the world. Even though the overall design might meet with a perplexed attitude by some of the public who are more at ease with the hitherto naturalistic depiction of the Israeli banknotes, it is safe to predict that with getting accustomed to their use more and more people will appreciate their novelty, originality and their effectiveness as a means of payment.



While the NIS 100.- note maintains the dominant brown color of the current one, the NIS 20.- is now produced in a vivid green color replacing the present gray one.

Yet, these portraits have not been engraved by the classical method as has hitherto been the case with Israeli banknotes, but they are drawn by interweaving, through an intricate system, the two Hebrew letters of the personality's name to form the facial values of its likeness. In Ben Zvi's banknote the letters are B.Z. while in Sharett's note they are M.S. The background designs of both banknotes display forms and features that represent some activities connected with the personalities shown thereon.

The NIS 100.- depicts:

- The interior of Mr. Ben Zvi's famous "hut" in Jerusalem where he received his audiences;
- An excerpt of the President's words delivered in the first congregation of the Yemenite Community in 1953;
- A view of the village of Peki'een in the Galilee and the old synagogue there;
- A passage from Mr. Ben Zvi's speech on his inauguration for a second term.

The features rendered on Mr. Sharett's NIS 20.- banknote are:

- The ceremony of hoisting the Israeli flag at the United Nations on the day Israel was admitted as a member of the U.N. on 11.5.1949;
- Passage from Mr. Sharett's speech delivered at that ceremony;
- Watch tower from the "tower and stockade" period prior to the establishment of Israel;
- Volunteers for the Jewish Brigade that fought with the Allies during World War II;
- An excerpt of Mr. Sharett's speech delivered upon his return from a visit to the Brigade.

Both banknotes have the same dimensions: 138 mm. long and 71 mm wide (the width of the current notes is 76 mm.). The notes of the whole series have been designed by the noted Jerusalem married graphic artists, Naomi and Meir Eshel.

As announced by the Bank of Israel, the existing notes will cease to be legal tender on July 1, 2000. Yet, all notes of the old series may be exchanged at the Bank of Israel until December 31, 2005.

Apart from the announcement by the Bank of Israel that a new denomination of NIS 500.-, depicting the effigy of the late Prime Minister of Israel Mr. Yitzhak Rabin will be forthcoming in the future no other details were released.

Hereinafter are the particulars of the security features common to both new notes (innovative elements are marked with a star):

- 1) The face value at the bottom left-hand corner is printed in hammered golden metal 'tint' (foil) that will disappear if photographed. *
- 2) Micro-numbers are repeatedly shown imprinted into the golden face value, perceived either by the naked eye or under magnifying glass.*
- 3) Watermark in the same look as the personality on the banknote is to be traced in its upper part. Under it, a tiny circle embracing the first letter in Hebrew of the personality's name is detected when looked at against the light. *
- 4) See through: A small triangle is printed in Juxtaposition on both sides of the banknote, in parallel locations, that merge to form a Star of David when seen against the light. *
- 5) Security thread is inserted through the width of the banknote.
- 6) Micro-texts and the sign for the blind are printed in intaglio (conspicuous ink).
- 7) Latent image in the shape of a triangle could be detected at the epaulet of the personality when the banknote is brought to eye level.*
- 8) Optical variable ink is served in ten small squares, arranged in the shape of a triangle, that changes color when the banknote is tilted. *
- 9) Micro-text is embedded in the center of the back, legible under a magnifying glass.
- 10) Iridin (transparent ink) is used in printing the face value in large digits which are detectable in the back when the banknote is tilted. *
- 11) The serial numbering in black becomes radiant under ultra-violet light. *

All the afore mentioned security elements will appear on the other two denominations, i.e. NIS 50.- and NIS 200.- which will be put into circulation later this year.

The portraits of the personalities appearing on both banknotes are similar to those rendered on the current ones in circulation, namely Mr. Yitzhak Ben Zvi, the second president of Israel, on the NIS 100.- and Mr. Moshe Sharett, the second Prime Minister of Israel, on NIS 20.-

A Russian Ritual Slaughter Token

Vinnitsa (Vinitza) is a town in the government of Podolia in the Ukraine, situated on the banks of the Bug River. Vinnitsa was founded in the fourteenth century on the left bank of the Bug, and was protected by two castles. The town suffered much in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the depredations of the Tartars and the Cossacks. Jews lived probably in Vinnitsa in the fifteenth century but the earliest information available on the Jews of the town dates from 1532. In that year, the local Jews carried on an extensive business as cattle-drovers, and one of them, Michael of Vinnitsa, paid customs duty on a single drove of 2,000 head of cattle and sheep. There is also mention that year, of a wealthy Jewish merchant named Mekhel, who traded livestock and wool cloth with Turkish Moldavia. Reference is also made to a Jew (name unknown) who in 1552 held the lease of the local customs duties. In 1616, there were fifty Jews in Vinnitsa who paid taxes on their houses.

During the Cossacks uprising, the town was taken and pillaged by Chmielnicki's followers and its Jewish inhabitants were massacred. It was retaken by the Polish troops, and then fell again under the power of the Cossacks and Tartars, changing hands several times. It suffered severely from the Haidamacks in the eighteenth century. The protecting castles by this time had disappeared, and the inhabitants, both Catholics and Jews, sought refuge in the Jesuit College founded by Ladislaus in 1649.

In 1774, Vinnitsa was temporarily occupied by the Turks, and towards the end of the eighteenth century was almost entirely ruined. In 1776, 381 Jews belonged to the *kahal* of Vinnitsa; of these, 190 lived in the town and the rest in the surroundings.

Thus, until the end of the eighteenth century, the Jewish community remained rather small and suffered from the attacks of the Ukrainian rebels who fought against Polish rule. The oppression of the Polish governors and mayors, as well as from the wars brought about the disruption of commerce on the nearby borders.

The Russian annexation (1793) resulted in continuous growth of the Jewish population in the town and its region. Vinnitsa had 23,591 inhabitants in 1878, of whom 13,750 were Jews. The town was then an industrial center of some significance, possessing sixteen factories and other industrial establishments. Nine fairs were held there annually, though but with a limited volume of trade. The Jewish community possessed thirteen synagogues and houses of prayer, a Jewish two-class school, and a Jewish hospital. Most of the important distilleries (an ancient industry to which the town owes its name) were owned by Jews. The census of 1897 found 11,689 Jews (over one-third of the population) living in the town which in that year had twenty nine industrial establishments, and the Jewish community had added a *Talmud Torah* to its other communal institutions.

Most Jews earned their livelihood mainly in tailoring and from commerce in agricultural produce.

On April 3, 1905, the Jewish stores in the Vinnitsa market place were demolished by a drunken mob composed partly of reservists. Several Jews caught on the streets were severely beaten. The conflict attracted the attention of a number of Jews organized for defense, who successfully repelled the assailants.

The community of Vinnitsa did not suffer greatly in the Bolshevik revolution of 1919-20 because the town served as the regional capital of the successive governments in the region. In 1926 there were 21,812 Jews or about 40% of the total population.

The law of *Shehitah*, the ritual slaughtering of animals, apply only to mammals and birds and not to fish. The slaughtering of animals is entrusted only to persons versed in the Law and skilled in their work. The custom is to allow no one to slaughter unless he has passed a rigid examination before a competent authority in all laws of *shehitah* especially those pertaining to the examination of the lungs, and has received a written certificate (*kabbalah*) of his knowledge of such laws, of his expertness in examining the knife and of his skill in slaughtering. Before slaughtering the following blessing is said. "*Blessed art Thou... who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning slaughtering*". It is customary to pay the *shochet* a small fee for his services, either by coin or pre-purchased tokens.

It was during the 1920's that the illustrated scrip token was used. It was issued by the Vinnitsa Co-operative Union in the amount of 50 Kopeks for slaying of five geese. It is about the size of a large postage stamp, being perforated on all four sides and was probably issued in booklet form, with tokens pulled out as needed. It also appears to have been blood stained.

This token is listed in most Russian catalogs of tokens, scrip and emergency money as being of Judaica interest. Three different denominations from Vinnitsa are recorded.

In the late 1930's, a Jewish pedagogic institute was established and also a Communist Yiddish newspaper (*Proletarisher Emes*) was published in Vinnitsa.

A few months after the occupation of the town by the Germans, on Rosh Ha-Shanah, Sept. 22, 1941, 28,000 Jews of Vinnitsa and its surroundings areas were exterminated.

According to the census, there were about 19,500 Jews or about 16% of the total population left in 1959. The former Great Synagogue in Vinnitsa was closed by the authorities and converted into a storehouse. Many former residents of Vinnitsa now call Israel their home today.

Б. Е. С.

БИЛЕНЬКІЙ
за зарѣзъ 5 гус.
50 к.

New Thoughts on Israel's First Banknotes

by Edward Schuman

The Jewish Agency was established as a non-governmental body intended to promote the development and settlement of Eretz Israel. The term Jewish Agency first appeared in the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine and outlined the functions of such a body:

"... an appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may effect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country..."

Prior to the founding of the State of Israel it was necessary to prepare a monetary system of currency for its use. This task fell upon the Jewish Agency to obtain new paper banknotes in a very short period of time. It appears that four different avenues of approach were tried to solve the dilemma.

Many obstacles were placed in the Jewish Agency's path. Credible printers of paper money were reluctant to become involved because the country had not yet been founded nor recognized. What was the unit of currency to be called? What was the country's name? And by whose authority were these notes to be contracted for?

The issuance of new currency usually takes from 12 to 18 months to prepare from start to finish. The Jewish Agency surely did not have this amount of time to waste.

There were several proposals. The one by the American Banknote Company in New York was the one accepted and the notes did arrive in time for the founding of the State of Israel.



These notes were denominated in Palestine Pounds and did not state any country of issuance. Gillouches for previously issued Chinese notes were incorporated into the new notes to save valuable time in preparation. The name of the American Banknote Co was intentionally omitted on the currency as they did not wish to place their name on banknotes which they considered not up to their usual high criteria.

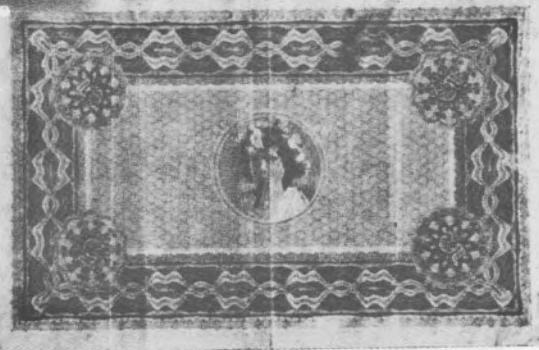
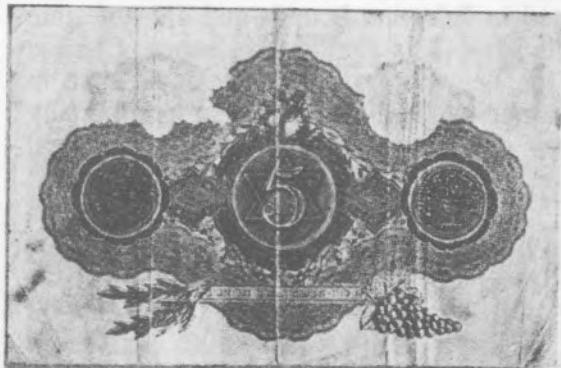
Another proposal was made by the Thomas de la Rue Co. banknote printers in England, and the printers of the Palestine Mandate Notes. This proposal was discovered in the archives of the Bank Leumi museum in Tel-Aviv. Several years ago, a color photocopy of the de la Rue note was supplied by the writer to the curator, Mr. Etian Burstein. Mr. Burstein had located their proposals but was missing the proposal specimens.. This color copy was taken of the unique original note in the collection of Dr Sam Halperin.



Ironically, a completely different 1948 specimen was brought to this writers attention in May of 1985, when it was listed in a Matsa Company auction catalog as lot number 2911. The lot's illustration was very small, 1½ inches wide and 1 5/8 inches high and encompassed both sides of the note which made an enlargement difficult.

The printed description was as follows:

"1948 - (just before the State of Israel was founded), 2 different trial prints of the proposal currency notes for the State to come. These were prepared for the Jewish Agency by Lewin-Epstein Printers, who printed their company's name on the proposals because the new State to come, (was) yet still to be named. Description: 2 Shekel coins, Magen-David, "5" in the middle as denomination. (reverse) a child with a flower crown playing a flute (as the symbol of working Palestine.. These two proposals (one in green and the other in green/pink/peach and blue are the only ones to be known.



The description also states "aged, stained, few tears and folds, possibly UNIQUE and the estimate (which was the start price) \$3000." It appears the larger illustrated photograph, which the writer recently obtained is of the same banknote.

A.Z. Lewin-Epstein was an early settler in Palestine. In his book *Zichronotai* (My Recollections) he tells about the issuance of the paper money of Rehovot which was issued in 1892. His printing shop was located in Tel Aviv.

The Anglo-Palestine Bank, acting consonance with the Jewish Agency, ordered the Shosshani Printing House in Tel Aviv, their bank check printers, to print a set of four banknotes, on watermarked check paper, that could be used in Israel in the event that notes being printed in the United States failed to arrive on time. The prevention of a money crisis was the order of the day. Shosshani printed in complete secrecy £7,465,000 (Palestine Pounds valuation), worth of four denominated check notes. After being printed, the notes were left in the custodial care of the Haganah for protection from any outside source. These notes were printed in April of 1948, dated May 14, 1948, and would have been the standard currency.

The American Banknote Company shipment did arrive on time. The check-currency was kept in Israel until September 1948, when it was ordered destroyed under government supervision. It is thought that only a couple of sets remained, but it is now evident that a larger number have survived. Somebody had sticky fingers.

**EXTREMELY RARE COMPLETE SET OF
ANGLO-PALESTINE BANK NOTES**





The Quest for Peace Among the Children of Abraham

King Hussein I

"I have often witnessed the wonderful discovery that occurs when people suddenly realize that they are the same, that their problems are the same, that their fears are the same, that their hopes are the same, that their aspirations are the same. And so I have tried my best to create a people-to-people relationship. As a result, a lot of Israelis listen when I speak with them or address them. We cannot ignore the human dimension of relations, and we should do whatever we can to encourage contact amongst people because, after all, it is not a question of peace between governments, it's rather a question of peace between peoples. That is the best guarantee of the kind of future we all seek. So that fears are removed, so that mutual confidence is built, so that relations are based on mutual respect and since there is no alternative except disaster to all of us in this entire region. We must do whatever we can for the cause of peace."

Interview with Middle East Insight magazine May-June, 1998



"To recognize ourselves – Arabs, Jews, Christians, Muslims, the descendants of the Children of Abraham – that in itself should be our greatest challenge. To come together, to work together, to revive the reality of our common struggle way in the past that helped contribute to the world of today its culture, its civilization, its progress."

Address to Representatives of the German Media Baden Baden, Germany April 24, 1998

"We belong to the camp of peace. We believe in peace. We believe that our one God wishes us to live in peace and wishes peace upon us, for these are His teachings to all the followers of the three great monotheistic religions, the Children of Abraham. Let's not keep

silent. Let our voices rise high to speak of our commitment to peace for all times to come, and let us tell those who live in darkness who are the enemies of life, and through faith and religion and the teachings of our one God, this is where we stand. This is our camp. May God bless you with the realization that you must join it and we pray that He will, but otherwise we are not ashamed, nor are we afraid, nor are we anything but determined to fulfill the legacy for which my friend fell, as did my grandfather in this very city when I was with him and but a young boy."

*Address at the Funeral of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
Jerusalem November 6, 1995.*



"The Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty marked the end of one period in our history and the dawning of another. It is the first step towards the restoration of harmony in the Holy Land, which God ordained, but which man disrupted."

*Address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Strasbourg, France September 25, 1995*

"The Christian-Islamic tradition of tolerance and coexistence in mutual respect has happily survived in the Middle East, despite the events and attempts that have threatened, even sought, to undermine it. As we consolidate and develop this tradition, we are now striving to revive the equally noble Judeo-Islamic tradition, which also endured for centuries, though it was temporarily overshadowed by the Arab-Israeli conflict. This cultural interchange made great contributions to the progress of mankind in philosophy, literature, science and the arts, and later it played an important role in the flourishing of the European Renaissance."

Address to the Museum of Peace and Tolerance (Simon Wiesenthal Center) Los Angeles March 24, 1995

"For our part, we shall continue to work for the new dawn when all the Children of Abraham and their descendants are living together in the birthplace of their three great monotheistic religions, a life free from fear, a life free from want, a life in peace."

Address to the Museum of Peace and Tolerance (Simon Wiesenthal Center) Los Angeles March 24, 1995

"The two Semitic peoples, the Arabs and the Jews, have endured bitter trials and tribulations during the journey of history. Let us resolve to end this suffering forever and to fulfill our responsibilities as leaders of our peoples, and our duty as human beings towards mankind. I came before you today fully conscious of the need to secure a peace for all the Children of Abraham. Our land is the birthplace of the divine faiths and the cradle of the heavenly messages to all humanity."

Address to the Joint Session of the US Congress Washington, DC July 26, 1994

"I look forward to a day when the parties to the conflict will till the soil, reap the harvests, plant trees and enjoy the fruits of their labor, in confidence and security. I also look forward to a time when all the Children of Abraham can proceed to their religious sites in the Holy Land in freedom and peace, guided by a spirit of amity, love and faith in one God."

Address to the Fortieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York September 27, 1985

"Jordan is the cradle of civilization, where in an area and a world of intolerance, a people, believers in one God, live in peace and total harmony as members of one family. As a Muslim, I know that my faith reveres all monotheistic religions. It completes God's message to mankind to live together in friendship and dignity, at a time when Islam, Christianity and Judaism, in many parts of the world, present an image which is totally alien to the spirit in which they were meant: the teachings of God in terms of tolerance and mutual respect."

Address to the European Parliament December 15, 1983

The Israel Government is issuing a State Medal as a tribute to the King who was one of the pivotal peace makers of the Middle East. The medal is announced following Israeli Minister of Tourism and Ministerial Committee for Ceremony and Emblem Chairman Moshe Katzav's request to honor the memory of King Hussein, through a State Medal.

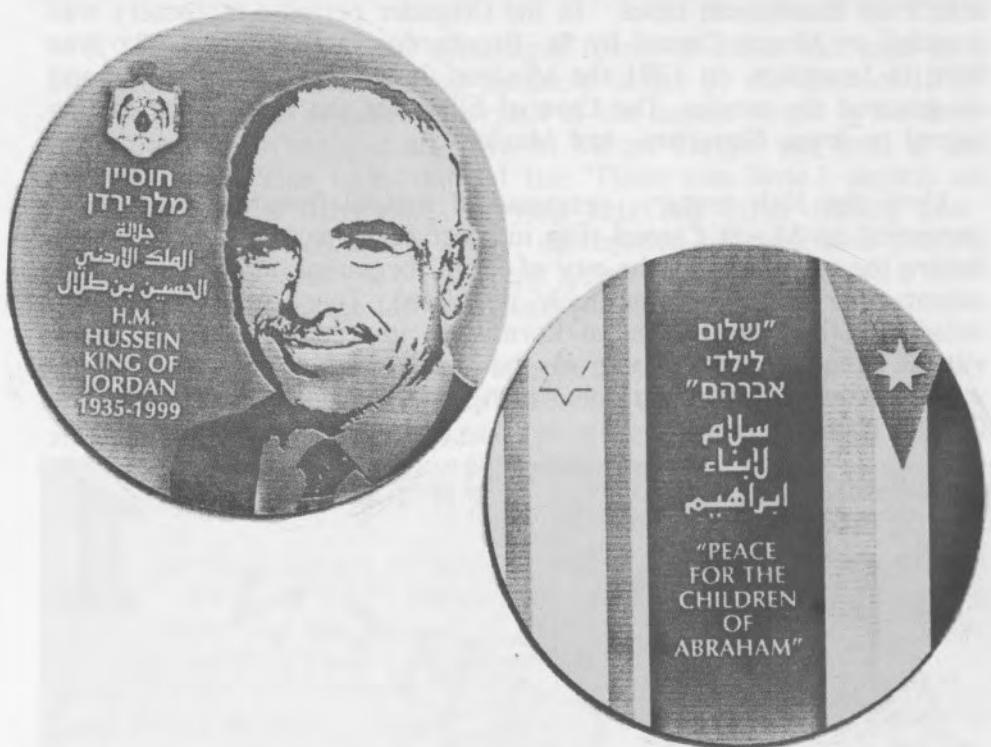
Approval of the issue has been given by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation Board of Management, presided over by Azriel Nevo. As Israel's Cabinet leaders have said, Israel, whose eastern neighbor is Jordan will remember Hussein as "the builder of peace with Israel, a very human person and a symbol of good neighborly relations".

Shalom Peri, Managing Director of the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation, says: "This is the first time Israel is issuing a medal in honor of a foreign statesman. It is our obligation to commemorate King Hussein and his contribution to the peace-making process of the Middle East, for the generations to come."

According to Mr. Peri, the Isrsel Government Coins and Medals Corporation began preparing the medal immediately after the death of the King. The obverse of the medal features a full face portrait of the King, with inscriptions in Hebrew, Arabic and English of his name and the dates of his birth and death. The reverse contains the words "PEACE FOR THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM," in Hebrew, Arabic and English, surrounded on either side by a Star of David and the seven pointed Star of Jordan.

Designed by Rubin Ntitels, the medal is to be struck in 14k gold, 30.5mm diameter, weight 17g, pure silver, 50 mm diameter, 60g, and bronze, 70mm diameter, 140g., and priced at \$391, \$82 and \$28, respectively.

A set of each of the three medals will also be available, priced at \$479. This issue will be limited both in quantity and in time. Maximum mintages have not yet been set. The medals are expected to be available within seven to eight weeks.



IMPORTANT: For information or to order please contact A.I.N.A., P.O. Box 940277 Rockaway Park, NY 11694-9266. Tel 718-634-9266 Fax 718-318-1455 Email ainany@aol.com Major credit cards accepted. Please add \$5.00 to all orders for postage. All medals will be shipped directly from Israel.

The Fisherman & Mount Carmel by Edward Schuman

Mount Carmel is a mountain range on the northernmost coastal plain of Israel. The striking shape of the Carmel promontory made it a conspicuous landmark for early seafarers who glorified it as the seat of a god, the Baal of Carmel. Carmel is possibly mentioned in an Egyptian document from the time of Pepi I (c. 2325-2275 B.C.E.) which describes the landing of troops at the rear of a high mountain called "the Nose of the Gazelle's Head." In inscriptions from the 15th to the 12th centuries B.C.E., it appears as *rosh kadesh* ("sacred promontory"); references to the *rosh* (promontory) also occur in the story of Elijah (I Kings 18:42), in Amos (9:3), and in the Song of Songs where the head of the beloved is likened to Carmel (7:6).

According to Josephus there was a Jewish settlement in the Carmel area from Hasmonean times. In the Crusader period a monastery was founded on Mount Carmel by St. Brochardus, a Frenchman who was born in Jerusalem. In 1291 the Muslims destroyed the monastery and slaughtered the monks. The Cave of Elijah, at the foot of the hill, is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Until the 20th century, remnants of natural forests were greater preserved on Mount Carmel than in most other parts of the country. Before the expansion of the city of Haifa, beginning in the 1920s, the mountain area was only scarcely populated. There were two Druze villages, Isfiya and Daliyat al-Karmil, in its central part, the Arab village Ijzim in a small vale in the south, and several more Arab villages along the western rim which had their farming lands in the Coastal Plain.





A feature of the ancient synagogue found in Isfiya was used as a motif for the One Israel Pound banknote issued by the Bank of Israel in 1958–60. The ornamental wreath of the mosaic found in the floor of this ancient synagogue at Isfiya on Mount Carmel was used as the reverse motif. This note, dubbed the "Fisherman Note," depicts on the front side a fisherman, carrying nets and other fishing gear. Shown in the background is a bay, surrounded by mountains (Mount Carmel) and four vessels of different types: two sailing boats, a fishing steamer, and in the far background a passenger liner.

On the back side of the note, inscribed in the wreath, using ancient Hebrew script, is the inscription *Shalom L'Israel* (Peace be to Israel), and, on the left side of the mosaic, in modern Hebrew letters *Papipas m'beit Haknesset Hakadum B'Husifah* (mosaic from the ancient synagogue in Isafiya).

In the initial period of modern Jewish settlement, the moshavah Zikhron Ya'akov was founded in 1883 on Mount Carmel's southernmost tip, but the rest of the area was left outside the scope of Jewish settlement until the Jewish suburbs of Haifa, particularly of *Hadar ha-Karmel* expanded to the mountain's northern slope. Two small Jewish outposts, *Ya'arot ha-Karmel* and *Bet Oren*, were founded on the mountain ridge in the late 1930s and suburbs of Haifa, *Har ha-Karmel* and *Ahuzah* reached the hilltop further north.

In the early years of Israel statehood, new moshavim were established in the Carmel Coastal Plain in the west, but only a few settlements were added on the mountain itself. These include *Nir Ezyon*, the artists' village *En Hod* and *Kerem Maharal*. Most parts of Mount Carmel have been set aside as a nature reserve.

The ALEPH BETH Page

...Dedicated to the Beginner

by Edward Janis

Q. Last week at a flea market, a dealer who sells foreign coins showed me an envelope that had one word written on it. **HAGANAH**. The lettering and everything else on the token inside the envelope was in Hebrew and it had a small triangle shield in the center. It was in copper or brass, quite thin, and about 3/4 inch in diameter. I looked in my Israel coin catalog and could not find anything that looked like it. Do you know what it is? C.H. Balt. MD

A. The reason why you could not find it listed in the Israel coin catalog is that this piece was struck in late 1938 in British Palestine. The Coins that were then circulating were the Palestine Mandate Coins of one, two, five, ten, twenty, fifty and one hundred mil denominations.

It was proposed that a sales tax be placed on every retail sale in order to raise money for the Haganah defense fund. This sales tax on every commodity purchased was to be at the rate of ½ mil, as it was thought a tax of one mil would be excessive.

The Palestine Currency Board supervised the coins and currency in circulation and had no authority to mint a new type denomination. A Jewish organization, the *Kofer Hayishuv* knowing that they could not mint money, instead issued this 18mm brass Haganah Defense token. It is believed three different dies were engraved for this issue, which were then hammered out of strip brass, with the reverse being an intaglio impression of the obverse.

Jewish businessmen and shop keepers bought these on a two for one basis because, even though they were not legal tender, these Haganah coins were acceptable as small change.

For an unknown reason, the British generally ignored the issue and use of these tokens even though these pieces violated the coinage statutes of the mandate regime. Some of these tokens continued to circulate well into the 1950's.



The three die varieties of the Haganah tokens, as seen from the reverse.

Type A: (left) The letter "yod" is longer than in types B and C. The dot in the letter "vav" is indistinct.

Type B: (center) The letter "yod" is shorter than in type A. The dot in the "vav" is clearly distinguishable. The foot of the letter "tav," in the date is short.

Type C: (right) The foot of the letter "tav," in the date, is much longer than in type B. The projection on the heel of the letter "beth" is longer than in either A or B.

Jewish Interest Honors & Awards-A Partially Lost Historical Legacy

by A.N. Pamm

The last two centuries have seen the development and proliferation worldwide of honors systems and awards of all kinds and descriptions. Simultaneously, there have occurred Jewish emancipation and greater integration into the mainstream life of Diaspora countries, Zionism, the Jewish renaissance in the Holyland, the birth of the State of Israel and the enormous tragedy of the Holocaust. On the world stage, civilization has progressed in various spheres, empires have dissolved, nation states have emerged and many wars have been waged.

Out of these converging historical streams emerge honors and awards of Jewish interest. These may be broadly categorized as follows:

(1) Honors and awards bestowed by Diaspora countries on their Jewish citizens.

These record the approbation of various Diaspora countries of their Jewish citizens for having fulfilled their obligations as citizens, for having participated fully (or to the extent permitted) in the life and times of their countries of residence and, in some cases, for having excelled and performed above the expected norm. They can be regarded as an extremely objective evaluation of these services since, in many countries and at many times, a Jew was less likely to be honored than his gentile fellow countryman. A very small minority would be for services by a Jew to his own community; the great majority is for services to the general community.

(2) Awards of Jewish Diaspora communities and Jewish organizations in the Diaspora.

These are unofficial/non-governmental awards. They vary considerably in type and purpose. Usually the recipients were Jews.

(3) Honors and awards relating to the history of the Land of Israel pre-1948.

These include Ottoman Turkish awards made until 1918, British Imperial awards relating to the conquest of Palestine 1917-8 and the subsequent Palestine Mandate and awards of, and relating to, various national, ethnic and religious communities resident in Palestine (as Israel was then called). Included would be awards made to both Jews and gentiles as well as both of permanent and temporary residents since it would be disrespectful both of the history of the land and the memory of those who have rendered valuable services to the Jewish people; (e.g. in recapturing Israel from the Turks; in the suppression of the Arab Revolt 1936-1939; in the prevention of crime and the maintenance of public order; in saving lives; in the social, economic

and infrastructural development of the land) to ignore the awards made to gentiles and to those persons who did not live out their lives in Israel.

(4) Honors and awards of the State of Israel from 1948 onwards

These include both state and nonofficial awards. Some relate to services rendered prior to Independence. Others have originated because of the various Arab-Israeli wars.

Relating to the history of the state, but not of Israeli origin and not awarded to Israelis, are the awards of the United Nations Organization awarded to peace-keeping contingents serving on Israel's frontiers.

Of this historical legacy, the questions arise as to how much survives, how much is adequately curated and how much is easily available and accessible to students? A short answer is not that much.

As far as documentary records are concerned, the picture appears to be as follows: some work has been done on specific countries and time periods. At best, it is very much partial in relation to the whole and much work remains to be done. Whether it will be is open to question as the field is generally ignored. Some of the research done remains unpublished while published work has appeared in numerically small editions in various languages and is generally inaccessible and unknown to the general public.

Expertise is in very short supply worldwide. No more than a handful of people can claim extensive knowledge of this field.

When one turns to the historical relics themselves, the record of survival of some is rather dismal. Reasons are as follows:

- a) The Holocaust saw large scale robbery, dispersal and destruction of Jewish possessions (as did earlier pogroms and persecutions).
- b) Emigration and forced population movements have caused loss and disposal of possessions.
- c) Economic hardships have caused the sale of awards.
- d) Many awards have been melted for their precious metal content over time.
- e) Separation of awards from attributary documentation has occurred. (Many countries do not put recipients' names on medals themselves. Instead an accompanying named document is issued. Once an award is separated from its accompanying document - as very often occurs - the Jewish attribution and context is lost)
- f) Families of deceased recipients have not survived to receive their awards posthumously. Many Jewish recipients of awards for service in the Second World War deceased during the war.

In the normal course of events their awards would have been awarded to their next-of-kin. However, because of the Holocaust, no relatives survived or could be traced and the awards remained unissued or in the custody of non-Jewish authorities.

Of those that have survived and have come out of recipient and family possession, many have not been collected and preserved in a Jewish context. In the main, curators of Jewish museums worldwide appear to have little expertise in this particular sphere and, in some cases, not much interest. If there has been any interest, in general it has not extended to expenditure of great substance nor the building up of collections of note. Whereas, worldwide, many non-Jewish institutions honor the memory of their decorated citizens and preserve and display awards, most Israeli and Jewish Diaspora museums do not cover this field in any depth, if at all.

More has probably been done by a small band of dedicated private collectors. However, these have been unable to touch all bases and much interesting (and, in some cases, totally irreplaceable) Jewish and Land of Israel material has been (and continues to be) lost to the Jewish world and acquired by non-Jewish institutions and private collectors.

In conclusion: much more could be done in this field and much more should be done.

These relics relate to and preserve history in an extremely intimate fashion in a way in which few other artifacts can. They were the personal property (and often the most prized possessions) of the people who made history. They record deeds and events and the participation of their recipients in those deeds and events. They are themselves the direct results of historical events and personal actions and contributions. They preserve the viewpoints of the issuer/bestower that services rendered and actions performed were meritorious and worthy of recognition and that particular people (Jews; people who helped Jews; people who served in Palestine and Israel) were worthy of recognition and reward.

Those who come after have a duty to preserve this record



Fighting Back by Moshe Kohn

REPRINTED FROM THE JERUSALEM POST

"JEWISH BRIGADE BEING FORMED" This was the two-column, two-line headline over an eleven inch story near the bottom of the front page of the Wednesday, September 20, 1944 issue of *The Palestine Post*. Until February 1950 *The Jerusalem Post* was called *The Palestine Post*.

That story, cabled by Reuters agency from London, reported that the previous night, the British War Office had announced that the "government decided to accede to the request of the Jewish Agency for Palestine that a Jewish Brigade group should be formed to take part in active operations."

Reuters cited the Jewish Agency as noting that some one million Jews were fighting in the armies of the United Nations. These included more than 30,000 Palestinian Jews who had volunteered for service in the British armed forces, 18,000 of them in the Jewish Battalions of the Palestine Regiment. They had fought in Greece, Ethiopia, Libya and Syria, and were then fighting in Italy and serving in Palestine and throughout the Middle East.

The next day *The Palestine Post* reported, under a four column headline at the bottom of the front page: "Jewish Brigade - End of Anonymity," that negotiations for the establishment of the unit had taken place at seven conferences in the War Office in London during the previous four weeks. The negotiators were Secretary for War Sir James Grigg, Agency Executive Chairman and World Zionist Organization President Chaim Weizmann, and the head of the Agency's Political Department and later Israel's first foreign minister and second prime minister, Moshe Shertok-Sharett.

What this *Palestine Post* story did not disclose (it was probably forbidden by the censor to publish) is a fact long known to interested persons, and "revealed" in several newspaper reports early last month. The reports disclosed contents of files from the Special Secret Information Center in Whitehall just released by the British government's Public Records Office. Reuters reported that according to those records, "British commanders blocked the formation of a Jewish army brigade for most of World War II for fear of creating a force that would fight for a Jewish state."

From the outbreak of the war in September 1939 till September 1944, Weizmann and other Zionist leaders, with the moral support of numerous Jewish and non-Jewish figures and groups in England, the United States and other lands, had been lobbying for the establishment of a "Jewish army" fighting under the Jewish flag in the war against Germany. Prime Minister Churchill frequently expressed support for the idea, but it was only in 1941 that he finally overrode the objections of his foreign and war secretaries and ordered War Secretary Grigg to draw up a plan for such a unit within the British Army.

Finally he received the plan, approved it, and the Jewish Brigade was established. On September 28, Churchill told Parliament: "...There are vast numbers of Jews serving with our forces and the American forces throughout all the armies, but it seems to me indeed appropriate that a special unit of that race which had suffered indescribable treatment from the Nazis should be represented in a distinct formation among the forces gathered for this final overthrow..."

Who where the men of the Jewish Brigade? "We were neither saints nor knights. We were simply Israeli Jewish boys who understood that we stand now for the Jewish people and we have to do something about it" – thus wrote one Brigade veteran, prize-winning novelist Hanoch Bartov.

What did those men accomplish? They fought with distinction, particularly against the Germans at the Senio River line in Italy in the winter of 1944–1945. When they were not engaged in battle, they spent their time bringing Holocaust survivors back to life. As Bartov put it: "We found dead people and helped them to come back to life."

Lisa Derman, a survivor found by the Brigade, said: "We cried. We screamed. We jumped. We kissed one another. Can you imagine, from the ghettos and the fires, to see Jewish soldiers?"

Men of the Brigade formed "Vengeance" squads, seeking out and eliminating known Nazi war criminals. They "liberated" British arms and equipment and smuggled them to Eretz Yisrael. One of their most thrilling operations was organizing groups of Holocaust survivors in various parts of Europe and smuggling them across European borders to boats heading for Eretz Yisrael.

Derman and Bartov were speaking as three of several dozen veterans and survivors interviewed for the magnificent documentary film, *In Our Own Hands*, telling the saga of the Jewish Brigade. The film, produced by a Chicago team, should be seen, and not only as the particular saga of the Jewish Brigade, great as that is, but as a major part of the saga of a people that emerged to new, invigorated life from flames that were intended to exterminate it.

The Jewish Volunteers in the British Forces State Medal issued in 1975 commemorates The Jewish Brigade.



Albert Einstein

by Abraham Goldberg

Albert Einstein was born at Ulm, Germany in 1879. He published his Theory of Relativity in 1916 and has since been regarded as the foremost physicist of our time. Einstein was regarded as an authority in his field even before the completion and publication of his Theory of Relativity. He was named director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Research at the University of Berlin in 1914, a post he retained until the Nazis came into power. He left Germany in the early days of Hitlerism and enriched American culture by his association with the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University.

Although Einstein had little Jewish background and has never been identified with Jewish religious interests, he had profound sympathies for Zionism. He had been active for many years on behalf of the Hebrew University and had issued public statements in praise of the Zionist achievements in the Homeland. Of an affable nature and bound by strong ties of loyalty to the Jewish people, he had given much of his time to a large number of Jewish causes and can invariably be relied upon to do his duty by his people. Upon the death of Chaim Weizmann, the first President of the State of Israel, the position was offered to Albert Einstein. He refused, stating he was not worthy of accepting this prestigious office.

The 14th of March will forever remain a red-letter day of the Jewish as well as of the general calendar. For on that day was born Albert Einstein, a spiritual colossus, an unsurpassed genius in his chosen field, a discoverer of new truths and eternal values. He charted new paths in human thought and broke chains that had fettered both science and philosophy.

Einstein invented no machines or mechanical contrivances. He did not smooth in any manner man's thorny path on this globe. Nor did he discover a remedy for any of the many ills that plague mankind, or contribute to the lengthening of man's life-span. He is a physicist and mathematician, and his theory is purely abstract.

What, then, did Einstein give to the world? There are very few persons who understand his theory, and of them only those who possess a thorough knowledge of physics and higher mathematics can really fathom it. Yet even those who understand or know but little of his theories comprehend his genius instinctively and perceive his greatness intuitively.

Mathematics was always considered the most exact and most dependable science of all. It deals with numbers and is therefore to a lesser degree subject to doubts and uncertainties. It is positive and precise. Two and

two make four today, made four yesterday and will add up to four until the world's end. The sum of two and two remains constant forever. Nevertheless mathematics does not lack romance, no matter how paradoxical this statement may appear. The generally accepted view, is of course, that mathematics is the very opposite of poetry, but, upon closer scrutiny, this is not found to be the case. Despite its exactness, mathematics is predicated on poetic imagination, just as mathematical exactitude forms the basis of poetry, as of all the arts. Without it, art would be formless, and "art without form is blind." Poetry is rhythm, and rhythm spells numbers. Music, the highest form of art, is based on cadences cast in mathematical molds, even its very terminology is taken from mathematics.

The Greek sage Pythagoras, who was a mathematician and a philosopher as well as a mystic and poet, held that numbers are the foundation of the universe and the mother of all things. The heavenly spheres, too, are dependent on numbers, and their equilibrium is but a geometric equation. He combined mathematics with music and designated it as the cause of the harmony of the universe. In mystical terms, he pointed to their correlation. His mathematical knowledge did not interfere with this proclivity for mysticism but rather furnished the key to it. In Jewish mysticism, too, numbers play an important role, as is proven by Sepher YetZirah, the Book of Creation.

Physics, too, is an exact science. It deals with tangible and visible objects and is therefore physical in the sense of corporeality. Physics operates chiefly with two distinct concepts: time and space. There is nothing in creation that is outside of space, nor is there anything that transpires beyond the confines of time. Until recently it was generally accepted that time was immutable and the same everywhere. There was similar agreement concerning space and its modes. One could entertain doubts about anything at all but certainly not about the infinity of space, its expanse, and its movement. Although philosophy posits different theories of time and space than science, it still regards them as fixed and eternal.

Einstein wrestled with the concepts of time and space in the exposition of his theory of relativity. Einstein is more of a physicist than a mathematician, but it was his mathematical genius that made possible the discovery of his epoch-making theory. He approached these problems as a physicist and applied experiments rather than metaphysical speculation.

There are many reasons for Einstein's popularity. He romanticized science for us and made it the handmaiden of mathematical-philosophical speculation. He obliterated the boundary lines between physics and

metaphysics by entralling the former as the most conclusive evidence of metaphysical truth. As a result, the universe became much more meaningful and luminous.

At the same time Einstein's personality exerted a profound influence. The few who can plumb the depths of his ideas marvel at the profundity of that singular intellect. And yet he is but a mortal man: only his spark of divinity shines so much brighter than that of other human beings. But there is nothing mystical about him; his field is pure science and he operates exclusively with its methods and instruments.

Einstein convinces us that the world is, after all, not so mechanical as we thought, and life is not so shallow as it is often assumed to be. There is a deeper meaning to it all, and Einstein has contributed greatly to its understanding and appreciation. Einstein is the Da Vinci among the interpreters of the riddles of the universe and one has to gird his loins in order to understand him. Einstein adds to our human pride, because the thought that he, even as all of us, is after all a human being, and no more, fires us with new zeal for the realization of our human mission in the universe.

Einstein is a warm Zionist. A man of cosmopolitan outlook, he is naturally opposed to any kind of chauvinism. But he knows that Jewish nationalism is free from any jingoistic tendencies. Einstein has remained humble and modest, despite the glaring spotlight of publicity which dodges his every step. He is puritan; in his tastes and needs, a believer in high thinking and simple living. He has managed to place a barrier between himself and the clamor and tempo of our time. The mere fact of his having been born a Jew, even if he were not proud of his Jewishness, would be significant as a powerful refutation of the racial theories that deny the Jews the capacity of original creation and relegate them to a nation of intermediaries, gifted, perhaps, but definitely lacking in genius. Jews are labeled intellectual middlemen, not capable of original creativeness. It is even charged that they have never contributed anything of first-rate significance. The best refutation of this libelous theory is the galaxy of ingenious and creative Jews in every age and in every clime. Einstein came at an appropriate time to confute these villifiers by his mere presence. The Jews are a small people, and science is a comparatively new field to them; yet they have contributed significant achievements in a single generation.

The Albert Einstein State Medal of Israel is the first in the series of six medals honoring "Jewish Contributors to World Culture. Details of the medal are on the inside backcover of this issue.

The Sommerfin Token by Edward Schuman

In 1964, a maritime company was incorporated in the Israel city of Haifa. The company, called Sommerfin, was organized as a shipping company to engage in transporting cargo between European ports and Haifa. They acquired several freighters and tankers which were used in this endeavor.

When an opportunity occurred for Sommerfin to lease a modern ship ferry, they did so with the objective to provide the means for an average Israeli citizen to indulge in a sea cruise or holiday to Europe.

Sommerfin began a promotion, in which tickets were sold for berths only, without compelling the passenger to purchase food in the ship's dining room. Thus passengers could economize by bringing food with them on board.

However, some passengers insisted on purchasing food onboard ship so Sommerfin began a cafeteria, which like all Israeli restaurants, had to be operated on an orthodox (strict) ritual basis and supervised by a delegate of the Chief Rabbinate. To satisfy the strict code of the Rabbinate, food could not be sold on the Sabbath and actual money be used.

The ship's owners produced bakelite, (type of plastic) tokens in four different denominations. Each bears the denomination in prutot stamped above a representation of the company's flag which bears a large S for Sommerfin.



The bakelite tokens were issued in 100 agorot, 25 millimeters in diameter, 50 agorot, 21 millimeters in diameter, 25 agorot, 19 millimeters in diameter and five agorot, 17 millimeters in diameter. In addition, each denomination was issued in four different colors; red, blue, green and yellow. There are thus 16 possible types to acquire.

These tokens were sold by the ship's purser on weekdays to passengers, and to crewmen who wanted to invite a guest aboard for a Saturday meal or drink. These tokens were thus only used on the Sabbath so that actual money need not be used in order to conform with the rabbinical code. In fact, even today, where strictly kosher food establishments are open on the Sabbath, means must be taken to prepay for food purchases in advance.

After being in operation only three years, the Sommerfin Company became bankrupt. All assets were sold at auction to satisfy their creditors who received only a small fraction of their original investment back.

While without any doubt, these token had to be issued in sufficient quantity to satisfy their needs. But they are excessively hard to come by and today, remain as just another story of an Israeli token.

Kiev's Jewish History

In 1914, just prior to World War I, The city of Kiev issued a bond for the purpose of financing municipal projects; building schools and a hospitals, laying of electric and sewer lines and construction of local roads. The bond was denominated in both Russian and English, as it was offered on the London exchange, with a value of £100 paying 5% interest. The war and the aftermath revolution caused the city to default.



Kiev's central position on the River Dnieper at the commercial crossroads of Western Europe and the Orient attracted Jewish settlers in the eighth century C.E. At first most of them were transient merchants from both east and west. Russian chronicles relate that some Jews from Khazaria visited Vladimir, the prince of Kiev, to try to convert him to Judaism in 986.

With the annexation of Kiev to the principality of Lithuania in 1320, the Jews were granted certain rights ensuring the safety of their lives and property. Several of them leased the collection of taxes and amassed fortunes. As the Jewish community increased in numbers so did the number of scholars, although the statement found in several sources, "from Kiev emanate Torah and light," is, in fact, an exaggeration.

Like the rest of the Jews in the principality of Lithuania, the Kiev community was expelled in 1495. When the decree was revoked in 1503, the community was re-established. However, in 1619 Christian merchants obtained from King Sigismund III prohibition on permanent settlement of Jews or their acquisition of real estate in the town. Jews were allowed to come into Kiev for trading purposes alone and might remain one day only in an inn assigned to them.

In spite of this, a few Jews continued to live in the town under the protection of local officials, who saw them as a source of income. The prohibition on Jewish settlement became final with the annexation of Kiev to Russia in 1667.

The Jewish community of Kiev was re-established in 1793, after the second partition of Poland when land was acquired for a cemetery. But the earlier conflict between the Christian citizens and the Jews began once more. While Jews struggled for settlement in Kiev, the citizens persistently endeavored to expel them, basing their claim on the status quo since Sigismund III and adding that "holy" Kiev was "profaned" by the presence of the Jews.

In spite of this, by 1815 there were about 1,500 Jews in Kiev with two synagogues and other communal institutions. Eventually Czar Nicholas I acceded to the demands of the citizens. In 1827 residence in Kiev was forbidden to Jews. However state officials, protested the expulsion would worsen economic conditions in the town and the execution of the decree was twice deferred. In 1835, however, on the expiration of the last postponement, the Jews left the town.

Despite this, they still played an important part in its economic life for Jewish merchants came in their hundreds to the large annual fairs held from 1797 in Kiev in January. In 1843 Jewish temporary visitors were officially permitted, provided that they resided and bought food in two specially appointed inns. These were leased by the municipality to Christian agents, who were empowered to deliver to the police any Jew who did not stay in them. These inns were abolished (1858), and instead a special payment to the municipality was levied upon the Jews as compensation for the losses caused by the abolishment of the inns.

In 1861 two suburbs, Lyebed and Podol, were assigned to those Jews entitled to reside in Kiev; wealthy merchants and industrialists, their employees, members of the free professions, and craftsmen.

In May 1881 a pogrom raged in the streets of the city, supported and encouraged by the governor-general. Jewish houses and shops

were looted. The damage caused was evaluated at 1,750,000 rubles. From that date the authorities began sporadically to investigate the residence of the Jews. In spite of persecutions, the number of Jews in Kiev increased to 81,256 at the end of 1913. In fact their number was greater, since many evaded the census.

Many Jews also lived in the suburbs and townlets around Kiev and only came into the city daily on business. There were some wealthy Jewish families in Kiev, who included many of the magnates of the southwestern Russian sugar industry. Many Jews were employed in their factories in the town and the vicinity. The city also had many Jewish physicians, lawyers, and other members of liberal professions.

In the wake of Jewish revolutionary activity, on Oct. 18, 1905, a large-scale pogrom occurred. Neither army nor police controlled the rioters who ran amok for three days. Soldiers protected the hooligans from the Jewish self-defense organization. The pogrom did not interrupt the development of the community, which became one of the wealthiest in Russia. In 1910 there were 4,896 Jewish merchants in the town, 42% of all merchants there. The community was officially recognized in 1906 as the "Jewish Representation for Charity Affairs at the Municipal Council." Its income from the meat tax and other sources amounted to 300,000 rubles annually.

A Jewish hospital for the poor which served the whole of Ukraine was opened in 1862, followed by a hospital specializing in surgery, a clinic for eye diseases and other welfare institutions. In 1898 a magnificent central synagogue was built.

During World War I, residence restrictions in the town were lifted for Jewish refugees from the battle areas. With the March 1917 Revolution, restrictions were abolished and Jews began to stream into the town and a democratic community was established. Meetings and congresses of Russian and Ukrainian Jews were held in Kiev and the central institutions of Ukrainian Jewry were set up there.

With the first conquest of the town by the Red Army, which lasted from February to August 1919, Kiev became a haven for refugees from the pogroms sweeping the provincial towns of Ukraine. The running of the Jewish community was handed over to the Yevsektsiya, and the systematic destruction of communal institutions, traditional Jewish culture, and national parties began.

During the first 20 years of the Soviet regime, Kiev became a major center of the officially fostered Yiddish culture, with a school system catering for many thousands of pupils and students, culminating in institutes of higher education and learning, such as the department for Jewish culture at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (1926) which in 1930 became the "Institute of Proletarian Jewish Culture."

The fall of the city to the Germans on Sept. 21, 1941 marked the end of Kiev Jewry. Some of the 175,000 Jews living in Kiev in 1939 managed to flee eastward to central Russia just before the Nazi

occupation but the vast majority was slaughtered by the Einsatzgruppe C, Sonderkommando 4A, who were ordered to exterminate the Jews of Kiev "including their families."

According to the official S.S. report a clever stratagem was adopted to overcome the difficulties resulting from such a large-scale action. On September 28 (Tishri 7) 2,000 notices were posted in and around Kiev, announcing that: "All the Jews of Kiev and the vicinity are to appear on Monday, September 29, 1941, at 8:00 a.m. on the corner of Melnikovskaya and Dukhtorovskaya. They are to bring their documents, money, other valuables and warm clothes, linen, etc. Any Jew found disobeying these orders will be shot. Citizens breaking into flats left by the Jews and taking possession of their belongings will be shot. Not suspecting what lay in store for them, almost all obeyed the German order. Rumors had been spread, apparently by the Germans themselves, that the Jews were to be evacuated to a ghetto or a labor camp.

When the Jews arrived in great numbers, they were herded into a closed area bounded by barbed wire, so as to prevent their escape. Hundreds of Germans, aided by the Ukrainian militia, blocked off the way back. The Jews were all ordered to put down their bundles and to strip naked. They were then led in groups down the side of the ravine, and machine gunned from the opposite side. Heaps of earth were thrown over the bodies, burying both dead and wounded. According to the official report of the S.S. unit in charge of the mass extermination, 33,771 Jews were murdered in Babi Yar on Sept. 29-30, 1941.

At the end of World War II, when thousands of Jews began to return to liberated Kiev, they often encountered a hostile attitude on the part of the Ukrainian population, many of whom had been given, or taken, the dwellings and jobs of the absent Jews.

The only synagogue, with room for about 1,000 persons, was in the Podol quarter. On holidays, particularly on the Day of Atonement, also the memorial day of the Babi Yar massacre, several thousands attended the service, overflowing into the courtyard and the street. A number of services (minyanim) were held in private homes, but when their existence was discovered, they were closed and the owners severely punished. From 1960 until 1966 the baking of mazzot was prohibited and several Jews were punished for baking them "illegally" in their homes.

After the Six-Day War (1967), Jewish national feeling re-emerged publicly in Kiev. The anniversary of Babi Yar became a rallying day for Jews, most of them young, who came not only to recite *Kaddish* but also to express their Jewish identification. Wreaths bearing inscriptions in Yiddish and Hebrew were laid and there were occasional attempts to make speeches.

Today, many thousands of former Kiev Jews now call Israel their homeland, and Russian is heard spoken throughout the land.

The Rabbi's Son at Stalin's Side

by Thomas O'Dwyer
REPRINTED FROM THE JERUSALEM POST SERVICE

He was the son of a rabbi, a protégé of Nikita Khrushchev, a body-guard to Joseph Stalin - and he saved the life of Menachem Begin. Alexander Contract's life story seems scarcely believable: is this man living history, or just a legend in his own time?

Yet there on the front of his well received 1991 book, *The Back Room*, is that famous picture of the jolly trio from the World War II Potsdam Conference. Joseph Stalin on the left, Harry Truman in the center, Winston Churchill on the right. Clearly visible over Truman's right shoulder is the young Jew, Alexander Contract. There are many other press cuttings and photographs, pictures of him in a Russian-captain's uniform with his 12 decorations on his chest, or with young KGB colleagues.

The spry and soft-spoken 76-year-old widower, now a wealthy and prominent fund raiser for the Israel Museum, is easily recognizable from the photographs, even if the hair has thinned and the handsome features have aged. Contract wears a chunky gold signet ring with the emblem of the State of Israel set in blue enamel - a personal gift from Begin, whom he rescued from Siberia.

Starting at the beginning: Wasn't it a little unusual for a young Ukrainian Jew to volunteer for the NKVD (forerunner of the KGB) in 1939, as Contract did? "Normally they didn't take them in," agreed Contract in an interview at the Tel-Aviv Sheraton. "Them" was "their" definition of Jews. I was active in sports, football playing and swimming...My mama and papa had seven boys and three girls - I had to get out of the back yard in Kovel." As it turned out, getting "out of the back yard" saved Contract's life - all members of his immediate family were murdered by the Nazis.

When Communist Party dignitaries came to visit the region, he was one of a group of young athletes chosen to give a display. As he waited to start a swimming race, he noticed a huge metal flagpole leaning precariously over the VIPs. "I was a kid; so without hesitation I dived in, swam over, grabbed the flag and pulled everything into the water as it toppled. They realized the flagpole would have fallen on the dignitaries' benches. These included Khrushchev, district commissar, and Lazar Kaganovich, the only Jew in Stalin's circle.



A recent photo of Contract in a Russian captain's uniform, with his service decorations.
Photo by Jerusalem Post Service

"I didn't become a young hero of the Soviet Union, but I became a young hero of Khrushchev," Contract said. Khrushchev asked the boy if there was any favor he could do him, and the young swimmer promptly asked for an interview in the commissar's office. "I waited at his office next day. He came and gave me a bear hug and said, "Come on in, and let's see what I can do for you." "I said, 'I would like to join as a member of the NKVD.'"

Khrushchev was taken back by the chutzpa, but then grinned and roared, "Sure! Why not? But first you have to go to school." So Contract spent three days a week learning how to handle a gun and to keep his mouth shut about it. When I came home and told Papa about it, all he ever said was, "Don't ever wear a NKVD uniform into this house."

One day Khrushchev summoned Contract and said he was going to assign him to the railroad as an undercover agent to spy on the commissars, and report to him. "There were really three different communist parties at the time: in the railroad, the city and the army. Each vied for privileges and position. Since Khrushchev was the city, he wanted to make sure the railroad people didn't railroad him." Kaganovich was railroad commissar. Soon Contract could tell Khrushchev: "They've hired me, and they'll pay me every two weeks." He said, 'That's fine; I'll pay you every two weeks as well.' "For a young lad, it was a hell of a lot of money."

When Germany invaded and Russia was dragged into the war, Contract - then known as Sasha Kontractov - accompanied Khrushchev to Stalingrad. "The Soviets had three lines of defense, starting with the penal corps (from labor camps and jails), which went to the front as cannon fodder. Second was the Red Army and third the KGB. I was KGB, with Khrushchev. Deserters got shot, so you had a choice - get shot by the Germans or get shot by your own."

By 1942 Contract had been wounded badly a second time and was in a hospital in the Urals, where Khrushchev came to visit him. When doctors told Khrushchev the boy would be six months recuperating, he asked him if there was anything he could do. Contract asked for another favor - to tell Comrade Stalin that he wanted to man the perimeter watchtower so the soldier there could be freed for the front. Khrushchev, impressed by this patriotic gesture, brought up Contract's case with Stalin.

'A week later he saw Stalin, and told him he had 'this jewboy' - Stalin told me the story late one night, after heavy drinking. "The boy speaks eight languages; he's very faithful and trustworthy. He is willing to die for our country." I wasn't, but Khrushchev said it, so Stalin said, "Bring him!" Stalin interviewed me. I was shaking, but I decided to be straight. I said, "General Stalin, my father is a rabbi; for two and a half years I attended a theological seminary." "So did he - we had this in common: His mother wanted him to be a priest. We used to talk about it at night, and even discuss philosophy."

In the Kremlin and close to his own quarters was where Stalin kept his secret "backroom boys," whom Contract now joined. Stalin made Contract wear a crucifix to protect him from suspicion of being a Jew and introduced him to the other boys as Sasha. Only single names were used; no one knew if they were real.

These boys were Stalin's eyes and ears, flitting silently through the night, gathering information for him and protecting him. "Stalin was more intelligent, but also a great deal shrewder than Khrushchev," said Contract. "Khrushchev was stupid. He killed more people, a lot more."

"I started with Stalin in 1942, so I really don't know about the 1930s. I know Stalin eliminated top officials he feared might be a threat. That's why he hired kids like us. I was one of 19 in the back room - not just as body guards but as food tasters, spies against commissars, spies against foreign dignitaries, always bringing him the information. Paranoia was a way of life in Russia." He became one of Stalin's trustees "maybe because I was a little smaller than the other boys, maybe because among all the other nationalities in the back room I was different. There were Hungarians, Poles, Central Asians and other Asiatics - he admired Jewish talent, I think."

But as food taster, could he not have been poisoned? "Oh yes, Life was cheap then in Stalin's Soviet Union. A boy dies? Get another. A boy did indeed die on a recreational trip to Sochi on Stalin's train when someone poisoned the dictator's pork. (Stalin had excused Contract from tasting pork, his favorite meal.) Lavrentii Beria, later interior minister, was in charge of security. He had the six cooks lined up, shot and thrown off the train," Contract said, adding that that was when he became a cook.

"I knew only how to make a cheese blintz and a potato latke from my mother." Stalin said, "Should I wait 20 minutes after you've tasted them?" I said, "What for? I made them - do you think I want to kill myself? Stalin got to like blintzes and later had his cook in the Kremlin make them."

How did Menachem Begin come into this saga? "Begin was in labor camp in Siberia. After the Germans and Russians divided Poland east and west, many Poles fled into Russia. When the Soviets were rounding up refugee Polish officers before the Katyn Forest massacre, I was with Khrushchev. He ordered me to sit in the car because I was too young to watch when he ordered the NKVD to shoot them." Contract claims the true story didn't leak for two years, by which time "I was with Stalin already."

Nazis in the Ukraine told the Swiss Red Cross that Russian communists had murdered many Polish officers there. Learning from Contract that Khrushchev, and the Kiev NKVD chief had ordered the shootings, Stalin summoned Khrushchev from Stalingrad to confirm it. His war ally Churchill was giving him a hard time about these atrocities.

"When I walked into one of the camps in Siberia, I realized from the list that there were four Jews there. Begin was on a list as a possible - but I knew he wasn't a Polish officer because Jews could only be enlisted men before the war." I went up to Begin, and shouted: "You, Menachem Begin! Straighten up like a Polish officer when a Soviet officer addresses you!" I really yelled at him. Then I shouted - at the other three Jews too . "Move over there with your officer colleagues." Begin was really beaten down and hunched up. "Our job was to take any Poles to Central Asia. Begin was with the group we took to Ashgabat in the Turkmen republic - 184 or 185 in all, including half a dozen Jews I had managed to slip into the group.

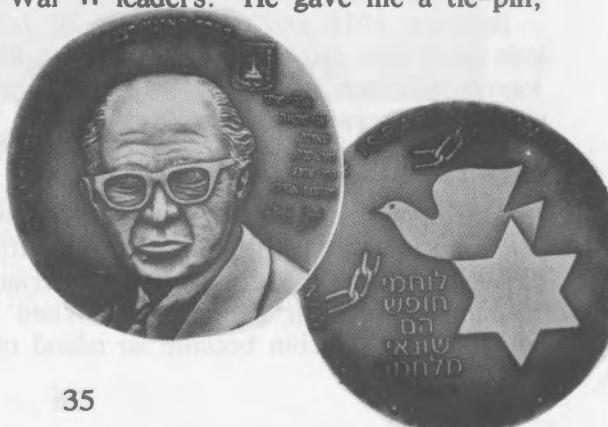
When we got the order, we took them across the border to Teheran, where they were handed over to the British embassy. But Begin disappeared. The next I heard, he was making trouble in Palestine. It was a few years later, and I was already in Germany on the way out" - for Contract had decided to defect.

After the war, Stalin appointed him as a junior prosecutor to be his eyes and ears at Nuremberg. As his ticket to the United States, he smuggled out top secret information from Stalin's desk, warning the American president that the Soviets were planning to double-cross their former allies and, under the guise of liberation, divide Japan in exactly the same way as Germany.

After operating in disguise for two years, Contract left on a ship from Bremerhaven as two Stalin agents tried to seize him at the gangplank. They were shot in the legs by U.S. military police and hauled away. Contract, aged 24, settled into obscurity running a small dry cleaning business as an immigrant in New York sworn to secrecy for 25 years by the U.S. president, as part of his escape deal.

"In 1954, when I first came to Israel I told my wife I'm going to see that Begin." He recognized me right away. He said, "If it wasn't for you, I would not be alive. Why did you pick me?" I said, "There were four or five Jews in that camp who didn't belong there. They had committed no crime, and they were Polish born."

Begin told me, "We must make an article in the papers, but I said I had an agreement with the Americans to be quiet for 25 years, so as not to embarrass the World War II leaders." "He gave me a tie-pin, cuff links a ring and a tallit with a silver collar. When he became prime minister, he invited my wife and me to lunch in the Knesset. Stalin's former KGB henchman gazed out over the Tel Aviv seashore." When Begin died I had a serious operation and could not come. I had the the utmost respect for him".



Harbin's Jewish Past

The modern development of Harbin, capital city of Heilungkiang, the northmost province in Manchuria, began at the close of the 19th century, with the inception of the Russian occupation of Manchuria. When Russia was granted the concession to build the Chinese Eastern Railway under the Russo-Manchurian treaty of 1898, Harbin became an important administrative center with a 30-mile wide zone along the railway. The railroad connected Harbin with the western border of Manchuria; with Vladivostok, Russia in the east; with the northern border of the Amur region; and with Darien and Korean border in the south. Its location on the Sungari River made it an important port.

Harbin served as the center of the Russian controlled part of Manchuria until it lost the region in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905.

A number of Russian Jewish families settled in Harbin, with the consent of the czarist government which was interested in populating the area as quickly as possible.

Harbin Jews had a better standard of living than that of their brethren in Russia. They were granted plots of land on the outskirts of the town. While Jews were not permitted to work directly on the railway, they were active as shopkeepers and contractors. By 1903 a self-administered Jewish community existed numbering 500. After the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, many demobilized Jewish soldiers settled in Harbin, followed by refugees from the 1905-07 pogroms. In a few short years, there were 8,000 Jews in the city. A central synagogue was founded in 1909. A Jewish home for the aged, and a hospital providing care for all nationalities as was built along with clubs for communal activities. A Jewish school was established in 1907 and a Jewish secondary school called *Yevreyskaya Gimnaziya* in 1909.

The influx of Jewish refugees during World War I, the Russian Revolution (1917), and the Russian civil war sharply increased the Jewish community which reached its peak of about 15,000 in the early 1930s. In 1923, a Jewish National Bank was established in Harbin as well as a Jewish library.

Between 1918 and 1930 about 20 Jewish newspapers and periodicals were also established. All were in Russian except the Yiddish *Der Vayter Mizrekh*, appearing three times a week. The Russian-language weekly *Yevreyskaya Zhizn* ("Jewish Life," which until 1926 was called *Sibir-Palestina*) appeared from 1920 to 1940 and circulated throughout Manchuria and North China.

The Zionist movement and several youth clubs also played a major part in the life of the community. Until 1921 Harbin Zionists were affiliated to the Russian and Siberian Zionist Organization and participated in their conferences. When Zionism was outlawed in the Soviet Union, Harbin became an island of Russian-language Zionism.

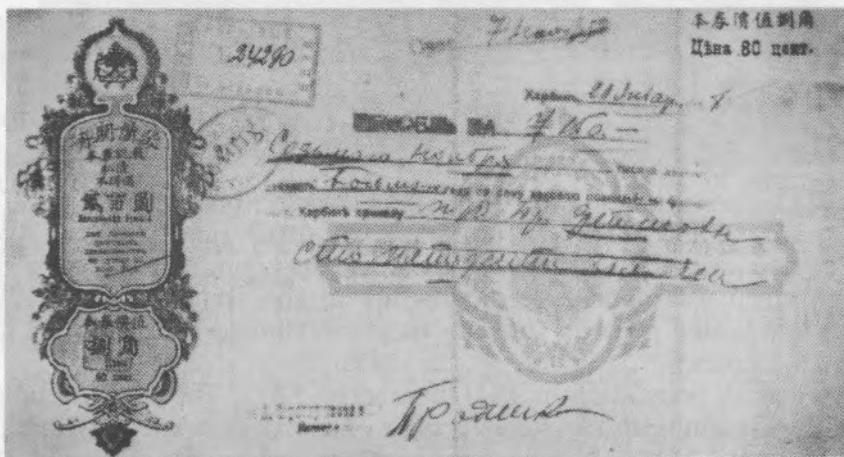
In the years from 1924 to 1931 the Soviet regime, largely pre-occupied with internal problems, exercised only limited influence on Manchurian territory. During this time the Jews of Harbin enjoyed the same rights as all other foreigners, and were left alone to prosper.

However, in 1928, when the Chinese Eastern Railway was handed over to the Chinese, an economic crisis broke out and many Jews left Harbin, some to the Soviet Union, others to Shanghai.

This situation changed drastically for the worse with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria (1931-45) and the establishment of a puppet regime. Under this puppet government Jews were subjected to terror and extortion. The treatment became even more oppressive in World War II when the Japanese, as Axis partners, and under the influence of Russian right-wing emigres, adopted an anti-Semitic policy.

During Japanese rule, Jewish national life was kept alive by Zionist youth movements, particularly Betar and Maccabi, which organized Jewish cultural activities. Betar, which was the strongest Zionist youth organization, published a Russian-language magazine *Ha-Degel* ("The Flag").

Many Harbin Jews left Manchuria prior to the outbreak of World War II, for the United States, Australia, Brazil, and other countries. During 1945-47, when Harbin was under Soviet occupation, many Jewish community leaders were arrested and sent to prisons in the Soviet interior. But in spite of this harassment, until 1950, four synagogues still existed in Harbin. About 3,500 of the former "Chinese" Jews, most of them from Harbin, now live in Israel.

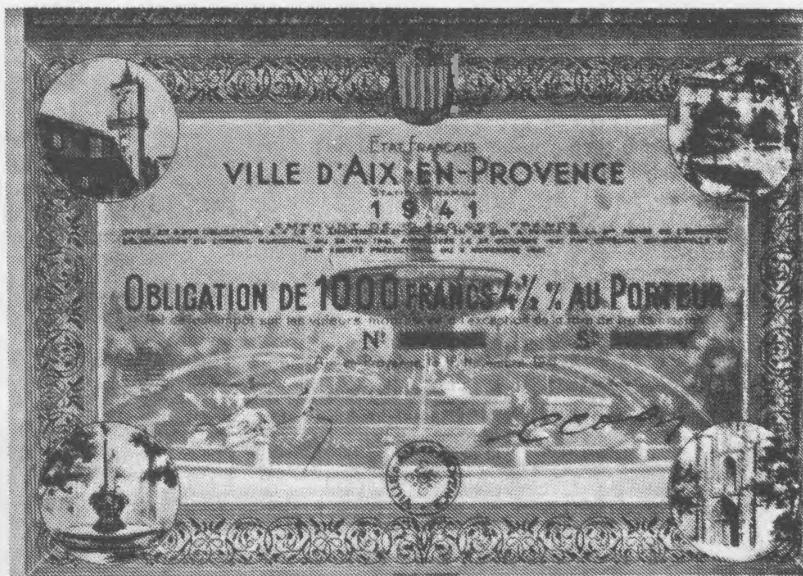


The numismatic illustration is quite unusual. It is a Russian Bill of Exchange for 150Y dated 1928. It was issued by a Jewish owned Russian trading-house Fetisov Brothers, in favor of the Jewish National Bank, and was endorsed to the Far Eastern Bank, both in Harbin. The printed text is in Russian and Chinese; stamps and manuscript is in Russian. The stamps include those of the Jewish National Bank in Harbin.

Aix-En-Provence

It is most unusual to find a bond certificate of a French city loan made during the World War II. The Ville D' Aix-En-Provence, a city located in Vichy occupied France, floated this loan in November, 1941. The certificate illustrated is of a 1000 Franc obligation, offering the rate of 4½% annual interest.

The certificate is printed in rose and black. The underprint shows one of the famous fountains of Aix, and the corner photo-vignettes are of views of the city, and also the arms of the city.



In 1283, more than six hundred years earlier, the first reference to Jews in Aix-En-Provence can be found.. At that time, Jews in Aix-En-Provence owned a synagogue and a cemetery situated at Bourg St. Saveur, which was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop. In 1299 there are indicated records showing they contributed to the annual tax paid to the count.

The Jewish population in 1341 numbered 1205. The Jews occupied 203 houses, mainly on the Rue Verrerie. The street was called Rue de la Juiverie until 1811. A synagogue was situated on the corner of the Rue Vivaut and Rue Verrerie, and another (1354) in the lower town. In 1341 King Robert of Anjou attempted to set up a compulsory Jewish quarter or ghetto, but despite several repeated injunctions, it had evidently failed to materialize by 1403. The Jews did not have to pay taxes to the municipality since they contributed to the annual tax paid by the Jews of Provence to the crown.

By letters patent of Sept. 25, 1435, Jews were prohibited from practicing brokerage, and were first obliged to wear the Jewish badge.

The restrictions followed the anti-Jewish riots which had taken place in 1430, when nine Jews were killed, many were injured and 74 were forcefully baptized.

A general amnesty was subsequently granted to the inhabitants of Aix. The position of the Jews in Aix was ameliorated when, in 1454 the King of Anjou allowed them to employ Christian servants, reduced the size of the badge they were obliged to wear and exempted Jews from wearing it while traveling outside the area.

When, in 1481, Provence became a part of France, King Louis XI confirmed the privileges formerly enjoyed by the Jews of Aix and Marseilles. But Aix-De-Provence Jewry again suffered disaster, however, when on May 10, 1484, they were attacked by bands of marauders from Auvergne and the highlands of Provence. These raids were repeated intermittently until 1486. That year, the Aix-De-Provence municipality asked King Charles VIII to expel the Jews.

The general decree of expulsion, which was materialized in 1498, became effective in 1501. The Parliament of Provence reissued the prohibition on Jews settling in Aix-De-Provence again in 1760, 1768, and 1787.

Shortly after 1789 nine Jewish families from Avignon settled in Aix-En-Provence. The Jewish population numbered 169 in 1809 and 258 in 1872 (out of a total population of 29,000).

In cultural matters, the Aix-De-Provence community took a prominent part in the Maimonidean controversy that divided Jewish scholars. The Jews of Aix-De-Provence were mentioned by the Provencal poet Isaac b. Abraham ha-Gorni who criticized them for their inhospitable attitude toward strangers.

The census conducted by the Vichy government in May of 1941 recorded 33 Jewish families living in Aix. When the Germans entered the unoccupied zone in November 1942, 2,000 Jewish refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe fled to Aix. Most of them were quartered in the nearby camp of Milles. In May 1943, following the roundup of Jews by the Germans in southern France, almost all the Jews in Aix-De-Provence were arrested and interned at Drancy. They were subsequently deported to Germany and most perished in the Holocaust.

The community practically disappeared during the years immediately following World War II. All the archives of the Jewish community disappeared during World War II. As the synagogue that was inaugurated in 1840 was not used for worship anymore, it was sold in 1952 and became a Protestant church. The prayer books and sacred ornaments were distributed among several neighboring Jewish communities.

In 1956 the French colony of Algeria became independent. The arrival in Aix of about 1000 North African Jews established a new community. The rabbi and the rite of the synagogue are North African and is administered by a council called Association Culturelle Israelite.

Archaeology in Israel

by Ronnie Reich

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In 1990, Israel's 42nd Anniversary Coin was dedicated to research in archaeology. Its reverse side shows Ancient Hebrew abecedary from the Lachish inscriptions, marking Hebrew Language Year, a relief from the ancient synagogue of Ashkelon and Herodian ashlar. The significance of archaeology in Israel is shown with this issue of a commemorative Independence Day Coin.

It seems that while most of the western world will mark the year 2000 as the "dawn of a new era," archaeologists, for whom time is the raw material for their excavations and research, will know that the 21st century actually begins only on the first of January, 2001. This date will signal some 150 years since the Frenchman F. deSaulcy began his excavations of the cave of tombs in Jerusalem - the so-called "Tombs of the Kings." It will also be the 110th anniversary of archaeological research using scientific methods of measurement, which began with the digs of the British archaeologist, Sir Flinders Petrie, at Tel El-Hasi near the town of Kiryat Gat. Since then, Palestinian-Israeli archaeology has come a long way.

What typifies archaeological activities in Israel, in comparison with other places, stems first and foremost from the history of the "Fertile Crescent." Israel is centrally located in this area, and was therefore repeatedly at the crossroads between warring troops, nomads, traveling merchants and migrating nations. All the major powers of the ancient world passed through it, or even occupied it: among them Canaanites, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Ottomans and British.

In the distant past, the Kingdom of Israel was the center of the events that gave rise to the title of "Holy Land" to the area; alongside ancient Greece it is possible to see here the cradle of western civilization. It was this paramount fact that brought the first researchers, in the second half of the 19th century, the majority of them devout Christians, to come and excavate the sites where, 2,000 years earlier, Jesus had trod.

The first archaeological expedition conducted by a Jew, with funding from a Jewish sponsor, and at a clearly "Jewish" site, took place in 1913. The mission of the Frenchman, Raymond Weill, funded by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, was to explore David's City in Jerusalem. Unlike archaeologists from other countries Jewish archaeologists perceive themselves to have a direct link with the exploration of the distant past in excavations from the time of the First and Second Temples or from the time of the Mishna and Talmud.



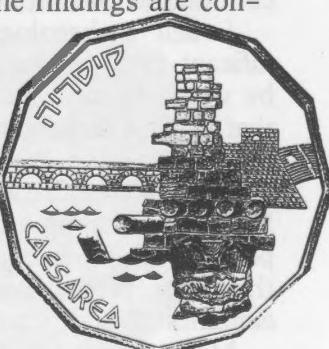
It should be noted that interpretations of the remnants of these periods are made not only on the basis of the early history of the area, but also on internal evidence, based on the Jewish religion and culture and the Hebrew language.

The intensive activities covering the entire prehistoric and historic periods, together with the very small size of the country, gives Israel the highest ratio of ancient sites per area in the world. The Israel Antiquities Authority has a computerized list of over 14,000 sites.

However, alongside this exceptional concentration of ancient sites is the fact that in Israel the speed of development is among the highest in the world. Though development is praiseworthy in itself, it carries with it some obvious problems. Those concerned with the quality of the environment demand that every stretch of land and its flora and wildlife be conserved in their pristine state. To meet this challenge, archaeologists have to be constantly alert. National development can be of real danger to the sites of antiquity, for if they are harmed, it is irreversible (unlike a forest fire, as for example on the Carmel in 1989, where vegetation and wildlife will restore themselves, given the right conditions).

The Israel Antiquities Authority has calculated that since deSaulcy's pioneering work, some 6,000 archaeological excavations and surveys, of different types and degrees of comprehensiveness, have been carried out in the area (including the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank). Thus, Israel is the most intensively-excavated area in the world today. Only a small percentage of the excavations are initiated by the Israel Antiquities Authority, or by foreign archaeologists. A good number of digs are executed as "salvaging excavations" which are carried out according to strict scientific criteria in places where development work has damaged an ancient site accidentally, or where planned work might damage them and there is a need to preserve part of the archaeological information to be found there.

In the last few years, there has emerged another category of archaeological excavations, and that is those undertaken in the interests of developing tourism. In places where the findings are considered of particular public interest, state funds are allocated to the researchers, both to undertake excavations and research, and simultaneously to carry out conservation activities which make it possible for the public to visit the sites. Such digs have included Belt Shean, Caesarea, Belt Guvrin, Hatzeva and Banias. The Caesarea Holy Land Coin illustrates archaeological remains in the city. In these places the archaeological excavations have also contributed in no small measure to relieving local problems of unemployment.



The approach of the 21st century calls for solutions to problems caused by development and planning. Particularly in the applied sciences (such as chemistry, computers or medicine) it is possible to direct the research to the solving of contemporary problems, important to the agenda of both science and the public at large. In archaeology, on the contrary, it is very difficult to direct research to solve problems which may arise, since it is impossible to predict at which sites ancient artifacts may be found that will provide vital information.

For example, we have not yet solved satisfactorily the question of the royal seal impressions from the Kingdom of Judah, from the end of the eighth century BCE. The identity of three of the four countries that are imprinted on them are known. But the fourth, written as MMSHT, remains a mystery. Archaeology cannot direct its excavations to a specific site, the layer or construction where a missing item can be found to solve a problem. The archaeologist has patiently to await the discovery of new items which may one day come to the surface.

Over the years, the chronological sequence of historical, and not a few pre-historical, periods has become clear. It is possible to say with reasonable certainty that the dates of different historical periods and their cultures are known and that there are no blank spaces. It is difficult to believe that, with regard to the last five or six thousand years, a new period, civilization or population will be discovered, tails of which are unknown to science.

But that is not to say that there is nothing left to do. Efforts must be invested to enrich information regarding each civilization, period. But most of the pressure will be a degree of refine dates of periods, or of this or that event, or adding difference to that which has already been uncovered.

For this reason, one of the characteristics of the last decades has been the tendency to return and excavate sites which have already been excavated, with the intention of better understanding the information that archaeologists uncovered in the previous century or at the beginning of this one. It would appear that this trend will continue in the future.

Israeli archaeologists are often asked to identify the most significant find" in our area. There are, of course, no objective criteria by which to measure this question. "Significant" could be a discovery that filled a huge gap in our knowledge. One such find was that from the Chalcolithic Period - the second part of the fourth millennium B.C.E. A treasure of copper and ivory vessels discovered in a cave in Nahal Mishmar in the Judean Desert is the jewel in the crown of this period. But more precise knowledge about the people who lived at that time in the land still requires further research based on large amounts of additional material.

Major progress in knowledge is usually made with the unearthing of written documents. Documents from Wadi Dalia, dating from the fourth century B.C.E., or letters from Bar Kochba from the second

century C.E., were major finds inasmuch as they provided information about periods of which almost nothing is known from historical sources.

However, no one would argue with the claim that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves at Qirbet Qumran near the western shore of the Dead Sea in 1948 is the most important archaeological find ever made in Israel. This was commemorated with an official State Medal, The Bar Kochba medal in 1960.



At one stroke, a number of different fields of research were greatly enriched: archaeology, biblical research, comparative theology, Hebrew and Aramaic studies, early Christian history all of which made a quantum leap forward. As regards the unearthing of written documents, hopefully there will be more discoveries which are rich in content and information, like that of a recently-discovered document from the ninth century B.C.E. found in Tel Dan which is mentioned below.

The largest single excavation undertaken in Israel since 1986 is that of Bet Shean. Significant finds have been uncovered from the Roman city, which was also inhabited during the Byzantine period and in the early Arab period. Parallel to this, archaeologists re-excavated the layers of the ancient tel of the city, dating from the Bronze Age.



At Banias, at the foot of Mount Hermon, excavations are unearthing sections of the city built by Philip, the son of Herod. Among biblical tels being excavated in recent years are the renewed excavations at Tel Hazor in the Upper Galilee, Tel Megiddo in the Valley of Jezreel, and Lachish and Tel Bayit on the coastal plain. Another large excavation is taking place at Tel Maresha (Marissa) near Beit Guvrin. The findings will hopefully fill gaps in our knowledge of the Hellenistic period.

In the Negev, the excavation at Hatzeva should be mentioned. Already discovered are remnants of a defended settlement from the end of the First Temple period and of the Roman period, which have been identified with the biblical Tamar. An Edomite ritual site rich in cultic objects has also been discovered.

Among ancient synagogues discovered in recent years is that at Zippori (Sepphoris), which is rich in mosaic floors and many inscriptions. Among recently unearthed inscriptions of importance are stelae from Tel Dan. These basalt shards carry remnants of Aramaic writing from the ninth century B.C.E. One inscription recalls the "King of Israel" and also "the House of David" as the name of the sovereign's house in Judea. This is the first time that the name of David has come to light outside the Bible.

The peace with Egypt put a stop to archaeological work which had been undertaken over a period of 15 years in the Sinai Peninsula. At the end of 1994, all the artifacts that had been found there were returned to Egypt. Israel thus became the first state to act in accordance with the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in Areas of Armed Conflict. It also became possible for Israeli Egyptologists to study ancient sites and objects in Egypt. However, apart from strengthening personal research relations, unfortunately, no Israeli projects in Egypt, or Egyptian ones in Israel, have yet been undertaken, nor are there any joint activities in regard to excavations.

As opposed to the opening up of archaeological vistas as a result of the Six-Day War in 1967, the last few years have seen a reduction in the areas of land open to archaeologists. This was initially because of the Intifada, and today is the result of the establishment of the autonomous Palestinian Authority. On the other hand, with the signing of the peace agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the area east of the Jordan River is now open for study. This is particularly important with regard to the periods, cultures and events that took place in ancient times on both sides of the river. One example is the Nabatean "Spice Route" - which passed through Petra, crossed the mountains of the Negev, to the port of Gaza.

As in the past, archaeological research in Israel will once again tend to concentrate on specific areas in the country. But what is clear beyond all doubt is that Israeli archaeologists will stand before serious changes and challenges resulting from the new political environment.



CLUB BULLETIN

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VOLUME XX No. 2 March-April 1999



INS OF LONG ISLAND - Discussion/study topic at the November meeting was anything beginning with the letter "B", along with any new additions of course. The annual Chanukah dinner festivities was held December 17 at the Glatt Wok Palace in Fresh Meadows.

INS / ICC OF LOS ANGELES - An AINA slide program was shown at the November meeting. A record attendance was on hand at the annual holiday party in December. The delicious spread was catered by Canters and Coin-O was the fun feature of the evening. Dr. Walt Ostromecki was on hand to present special AINA certificates to several members (who regularly work behind the scenes): Syd Singer, co-editor of club newsletter "The Oracle"; Avi Elias, drawing coordinator; and yours truly as representing the club for 20 years as an AINA board member and authoring the AINA club bulletin, also for 20 years. Needless to say, we were all pleasantly surprised. (At this moment I think I am forgetting someone, and if so, I will include their name next time.) January will be the first meeting in a new location, to be announced just prior to the next meeting.

INS OF MICHIGAN - The last club meeting of 1998 was held in November with a "Show and Tell" session as the program feature. Members were asked to speak for five minutes on just about anything: numismatics, Chanukah, Israel, a recent trip somewhere or another hobby subject.

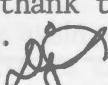
WHY NOT BE THE SPEAKER AT ONE OF YOUR CLUB MEETINGS!

INS OF NEW YORK - Exhibit topics at the December meeting were: the letter "V"; the candelabra; Kislev-Hanukkah, Tevet-Asarah B' Tevet as calendar items; and as always, any recent acquisitions. For January: the letter "W"; caduceus; Rosh Hodesh and Tu B'Shevat as calendar items; and anything new. The challenge? Trying to bring one numismatic item with all three categories. Wonder if anyone actually did it?

COMING UP / SOMETHING NEW: The "Buy/Sell/Exchange" column should hopefully be ready to begin with the next issue of the Club Bulletin. A more comprehensive writeup about this was in our last issue. All inquiries should be addressed, along with a SASE, to the address shown at the top of the first page. Please include complete information: your name, mailing address and a phone number (to be used only if necessary; will not be published) and your list of items to sell and/or exchange or your list of wanted items.

AINA TOUR: Hopefully, the study tour is going full speed as you are reading this now. The itinerary sounded fabulous and just the thought of those famous Israeli breakfasts is making me hungry. I will be looking forward to hearing all the tour news very shortly. Safe trip to all.

MOMENTS IN THOUGHT: I have learned: that it's not what happens to people that's important; it's what they do about it. ... that you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life. ... that no matter how thin you slice it, there are always two sides. ... that heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences. ... that just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have. ... that my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best of time. (anonymous)

COMMENTS FROM DJS: The holidays are long over, spring is here (hopefully everywhere weatherwise) and conventions and meetings are still going on. But just how long can they continue if you, the member, do not get out and support them. Support your club with your attendance, participation and maybe even be a speaker once in awhile. I thank those of you who have written. Be well, be happy. . . . 

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